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ARMY ALTERS WAY TO RATE OFFICERS

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New Efficiency Report Aims to Curb the 'Yes Man'

WASHINGTON, Jan. 2 (UPI) —Responding to charges that promotion go first to the conformist who does not rock the boat, the Army has scrapped the old version of its officers' annual efficiency report.

A new system put into effect yesterday is designed to "measure the man" better and encourage the "yes man" less.

A similar but more gradual revision of the Army's officer career management system also is under way, aimed at producing more specialists and fewer generalists. Officials hope this change will relieve many old pressures for an officer to "get his ticket punched" with a combat command in order to win promotions.

Both changes are part of a major effort to erase scars left by Vietnam and to build a more professional officer corps, highly motivated and able to cope with the era of the all-volunteer Army and the increasingly specialized demands of a space-age technological world.

Key to a Career

The yearly efficiency report is the official measure of the man who chooses a career as a military officer.

Over the years this report has undergone many changes. The latest revision is the third since 1963.

Officials said the roots of the latest revision lay in a study begun three years ago on how to rate performance. This study, they said, "plowed a lot of new ground" and included a look at the way private industry and the armies of other nations handled the task.

"It indicated that we needed to take a broader look at officer evaluation," one officer said. "It's impossible to develop a single sheet of paper that will tell you all you want to know about an individual, but you have to try."

Careers hinge on the efficiency report. It is, officials say, one of the key items in determining not only how far and how fast a man climbs the promotion ladder but also what career schools he attends and what assignments he receives.

Three Phases to Form

By design, there are no great dramatic differences in the new report.

The form still fills one page, front and back.

It still has the same system of checks and balances—a rater, usually the immediate superior of the man being rated, who performs the evaluation; an endorser, who rates the rater, and a reviewer, who double-checks others.

But there are some significant changes.

For the first time, it is mandatory that the officer being rated receive a copy of his report. The just-discarded system, adopted in 1968, made it optional whether a man saw his own report. The 1963 system used before that flatly prohibited him from seeing it.

The scores on the new report are "machine capturable," meaning a profile of the man—or of the entire officer corps—can be programed into a computer.

Also, the man being rated will be told how he ranks by mean grade average among all other officers of his rank. "That way I will know how I stand with my peers," one official said. "And that's very important, because I don't guess there's a man anywhere who doesn't wonder how he's doing competitively."

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